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Grandfather's gift

There was a man in his seventies with terminal cancer. His family decided he would be most comfortable in his own home rather than nursing home or hospice. This required extra care on weekdays for his medical and emotional needs. A grandson was recovering from head trauma and depression and he volunteered to be the caregiver for grandpa's last days. The role of caregiver was there but grandfather had an unexpected role in the young man's life. The head trauma had caused some loss of long term memory and medicine was not helping.

The old man was in pain often and was known to only have a third grade education. the grandson did not expect anything from grandpa but a nice story now and then. a few weeks into the care-giving, the old man started to ask curious questions. he wondered about how various appliances worked. he asked about household plumbing and electricity. For months the grandson thought grandpa was 'passing time' with these questions. grandfather started to invite neighbors to come and ask questions too. while happy to oblige, it seemed strange that the caregiver was 'in the spotlight'. the questions became broader as well. how a car worked and how power is generated became topics of interest for grandfather. Why?

With increasing illness the questions remained unabated! After near exhaustion from care-giving and from research at home to answer grandpa's questions, the young man gently asked why. The answer was heartwarming and surprising! Grandpa pulled out a stack of drawings and research the young man had done. Why were they saved? Grandfather asked is this the work of a man with poor memory? No, my dear boy, you have regained all that was lost and then some. My neighbors think they have received the education of their lives from you. Your uncle is a teacher by trade and yet he never took time to answer their questions. You never talked down to anyone no matter how long it took for them to grasp the material. Dear boy, you have become my inspiration! I look forward to your eyes dancing as you recall facts and figures and the smile as you draw diagrams. Grandpa repaid the time of care-giving with added dividends! He took the grandson's broken

life and made it overflows with renewed confidence. The last days came and grandfather slipped gently into coma on his bed. Within a week he died and I grieved! I lost a best friend and subtle teacher. As long as I live Orazio Gianni Tosto lives in me. His lessons still inspire confidence today thirty three years later!